Learning To Use Blackboard

Learning To Use Blackboard Workshop

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Overview

The Washington County School district has requested an in-service workshop for the 160 teachers in their school district. The topic of the in-service will be, “Learning to Use Blackboard’. Teachers will be trained in the computer lab on Windows XP machines that have Blackboard accessibility along with broadband access. Teacher’s skills with computers range from complete novice to expert. There will be a timeframe of one to three hours for this workshop. The first 1.5 hours will be instruction and the following 1.5 hours will be hands on activities working directly with the Blackboard Learning System. There are a limited number of computers, 40, so teachers will be separated into two groups of 80.

Blackboard is a web-based course content management system that allows instructors to place course materials into a website that can be easily accessed by students. Blackboard enables teachers to enhance in-class instruction by providing 24/7 access to course materials along with a variety of tools that can assist instructors with the management of their courses. In this instructional/ hands-on workshop, you will learn how to build a Blackboard course site by uploading course documents, organize material, apply course designs to your site, how to add announcements, content areas (which are like Organize Pages ), syllabus, lecture files, how to add new assignments and check students’ submissions. You will also learn how to use and incorporate the different collaboration tools, such as discussion forums and chats, in Blackboard.
ID Model & Rationalization

This plan will follow the Dick, Carey, and Carey model. The systems-oriented Dick and Carey model details an iterative process that is applicable across a range of context areas. This model is perhaps the most well known of the systematic design models and is the standard to which all other ID models are compared (Gustafson and Branch, 2002). This model focuses the designer on the goal of the instruction by requiring a needs assessment and the documentation of clear and measurable learning objectives (Gustafson and Branch, 2002).

The Dick, Carey, and Carey Model was chosen as the instructional design model for this project for several reasons. First, the emphasis it places on needs assessment procedures and having clear and measurable goals. Focusing on these in the beginning brings to light what the learner knows now, and more importantly what the learner will need to know when the instruction is concluded. Without this step, planning and implementation steps can become unclear and ineffective. Second, this model is based on a systematic process. Instruction is commonly thought to have only three parts: teacher, student, and learning material. The systematic approach recognizes the role the environment plays in learning (Gustafson and Branch, 2002). The systematic approach is a replicable process. Therefore, instruction can be delivered not only once, but on many occasions with as many learners as possible. When implementing the new Blackboard Learning system this replicatable process will be helpful for future in-service of new staff members along with refresher in-services for current staff. Lastly, this model is the most commonly used model to develop multimedia products, educational materials, and training materials, as well as influencing technology and the application of computers to instruction (Gustafson and Branch, 2002). This is an important point because this in-service will meet the criteria of one; being taught this program on computers and two; it is taking place in an educational setting using training materials.
The Washington County School District has already purchased and installed the Blackboard Learning System. There is a need for training for 160 of its teachers on the new system. Before training can take place some analysis of the learning context will need to be addressed. The analysis will be done on-site and thru questionnaires to the major stakeholders that will be involved.

The first phase will be an on-site visit and interview with the technology department. During this phase questions will be addressed that pertain to the hardware, software, and technology infrastructure of the training facility. More specifically; Is Blackboard installed and operation in the training lab? Do all teachers have their usernames and passwords already set up in the system or will that have to be done prior? Are the teacher’s students entered into the system already or are they using dummy accounts? Are all the computers updated with the latest Java that is needed to run Blackboard? Are all 40 computers up and operational? Is the districts bandwidth...
Learning To Use Blackboard

enough to run Blackboard? Since there are only 40 computers will the logistics allow for teachers to double-up on computers? Will a technician be available if problems pop-up during the in-service? Will there be access to a Smart Board and a LCD projector?

Following the on-site phase of the analysis will be a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be for administrators. It will be sent out to clarify what the requirements for staff will be in regards to Blackboards usage after training as occurred. Will there be a new policy requiring all teachers to now use the Blackboard system? If so, does every teacher have access to Blackboard in their classroom? Do students have access to computers thru the school day to access assignments on Blackboard? If assignments are going to be required this way, how are you going to address students that don’t have computers at home?

These questions about the learning environment/context will need to be addressed so the proper adjustments can be made to the instructional design.

**Analysis of the Learners**

The analysis of the learners will be done primarily thru interviews, on-site observations, and a survey that will be sent out to all 160 trainees via email. The intent of the survey is to gain an understanding of the trainee’s specific prior knowledge, cognitive characteristics, affective characteristics, and physiological characteristics. The results of the survey will help to establish appropriate instructional materials.

The first part of the survey, specific prior knowledge, is the single most important factor to consider when designing instruction (Smith & Ragan 2005). What do the trainees already know in the area they are learning? Is there a wide variation in the background knowledge among the learners? The next category, cognitive characteristics, will help us to find out how the majority of the trainees prefer to learn. Are the majority “visual learners” or auditory leaners”? These questions will provide
insight into how to effectively deliver the training. In order to make learning relevant and meaningful, it is important that designers obtain information on learner’s affective characteristics (Smith & Ragan 2005). Careful consideration of the learner’s interests, anxieties, beliefs, attitudes toward learning, and attitudes towards the subject matter, must be taken. This will help create effective, efficient, and interesting instructional materials. The last category we will gather information on is the learner’s physiological characteristics. For example, a learner who has trouble seeing might need to be seated in the front of the room. If a learner has trouble hearing, maybe a voice amplifier will need to be set up for training. Learner characteristics can affect instruction at the most fundamental level (Smith & Ragan 2005), therefore all these characteristics must be taken into consideration in order to make the instructional materials as effective as possible.

**Survey**

The survey that the participants will take part in is approximately 14 questions long and is a Google Documents form. It will be emailed to all 160 participants via their school email address. It will be sent out 3 weeks prior to training taking place, this will allow for a sufficient amount of time for responses. The survey link is: [http://tinyurl.com/ye5ht6b](http://tinyurl.com/ye5ht6b)

**Report**

The survey indicates that 150 or 94% of the 160 teachers surveyed responded. The response to how people prefer to learn indicates that 70% prefer some sort of visual presentation. Twenty percent choose hands on, and 10% choose a lecture based style of learning was preferred. The results can be reviewed in Table 1 below. This information will allow us to design the instruction to reflect how the majority of the people prefer to learn. The instruction, based on the results should include a presentation followed by some sort of hands-on work.
The next question asked how trainees rate themselves when it comes to computers. Seventy-eight percent rate themselves above average when it came to using computers. Fourteen percent rated themselves as slightly below average and 8% rated themselves as novice.

To gain some understanding of the specific prior knowledge trainees had, they were asked what kinds of online tools they had experience using. The chart below (Table 2) shows the tools that trainees have used. The results were pretty impressive with a high percentage of trainees having used a lot of the tools or skills that are helpful to know when using the Blackboard Learning System. Due to the fact that a lot of the trainees have used a lot of the tools necessary to use Blackboard, the instruction will just have to briefly touch on a few things as a refresher; this will allow the majority of the time to be focused on more advanced areas of Blackboard.
The next relevant statistic we found from the survey pertaining to specific prior knowledge was the trainees experience when it came to using different operating systems. The result were very much as expected 90% of the users experience was with Windows based operating systems, whether it be Windows 98, XP, or Vista. Eight percent of the users had MAC experience and only 2 % had Linux experience.
When asked about the importance of technology in the classroom the trainees responded overwhelming in favor of using technology in the classroom. Most reported in their written responses that they felt technology was very important to the 21st century learning environment. The fact that society and the modern workforce all require computer literacy was an important factor mentioned by the majority of the trainees.

When it came to physiological limitations, ninety-eight percent of the trainees reported that they did not have any difficulties seeing, sitting for long periods of time, or reading from a computer screen. Two people report seeing from a distance along with sitting for long periods of time and one person reported having difficulty reading off a computer screen. Special arrangements will be made for these individuals when it comes to seating and special screen readers for their computers.

The last category surveyed was trainee’s anxiety when it came to learning about computers. More than 60% said they were very relaxed learning about computers, 35% said they were somewhat relaxed and only 4% reported being very anxious when it came to learning about computers and 1% said they were somewhat anxious. See Table 4 below.

![Comfort Learning Computers](image)

**Table 4**
Analysis of the Learning Task

Learning Goal

Given the Blackboard Learning System, the learner will learn how to build a Blackboard course site by, adding an assignment, organizing material, and applying course designs to your site.

Task Analysis

The task consists of using the Blackboard Learning System to create a course site, create an assignment, and assign the assignment along with a due date and instructions. An overview of the task analysis can be seen below. For a more detailed view please visit: http://www.mywebspiration.com/view/377286a2e0cf
Learning Objectives

There are six main objectives for this training course with several sub-objectives for each one. There are also three entry-level skills which trainees should have prior to taking this course. For a detailed list of objectives, their outcome levels and assessments see Appendix A.

Learning Assessment

There will be two kinds of assessments done for this training module; formative and summative. The formative assessment will be conducted by the trainers during the 90 minute class project. The project will consist of giving each teacher a fictional class list of students. With this information learners will set up their classes in Blackboard, create an assignment, give the assignment a title with detailed instructions, assign the assignment to their respective class, and assign a due date. This assessment will determine how well participants met the given objectives according to a rubric (see Rubric 1). During the formative assessment trainers will observe the learners work and be available to provide immediate feedback and corrective action if needed.

The summative assessment will be conducted by building administrators as well as other participants in the course. For this assessment all participants will be given their actually class schedules and rosters of students. With this information learners will set up their classes in Blackboard, organizing material, apply course designs, create an assignment, give the assignment a title with detailed instructions, assign the assignment to their respective class, and assign a due date. Trainees will have one week prior to receiving their class lists to complete the task. This will reinforce and enhance what trainees have learned in the training program plus allow them to get their actually Blackboard site built. Rubric 2 will be used for feedback.
Rubric 1

Formative Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
<th>Meets some expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logs in and navigates Blackboard</strong></td>
<td>Had trouble navigating and finding things in the program</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Logged in and navigated Blackboard without any problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creates an assignment</strong></td>
<td>Was not able to create an assignment</td>
<td>Was able to post an assignment but was missing parts or was unclear</td>
<td>Assignment was created and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gives the assignment a title with detailed instructions</strong></td>
<td>Was not able to figure out how to give an assignment a title or instructions</td>
<td>One of the two items were missing</td>
<td>Title and instructions were both posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assigns the assignment to their respective class</strong></td>
<td>Assignment was not made available to the class</td>
<td>Assignment was available but not to all students</td>
<td>Assignment was made available to all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create a link for the assignment</strong></td>
<td>Assignment link was not created</td>
<td>Link was created but wasn’t working</td>
<td>Link was created and took you to the appropriate assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assigns a due date</strong></td>
<td>No due date was assigned</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Due date was assigned and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completes the grading section</strong></td>
<td>Grading section was not set up and contained no grades</td>
<td>Grading section was only partially set up.</td>
<td>Grading section was set up properly and contained grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summative Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
<th>Meets some expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set up their classes in Blackboard</strong></td>
<td>No classes were set up set in Blackboard</td>
<td>Classes were set up but were missing unavailable to view</td>
<td>Classes were set up properly and available for viewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizing class material</strong></td>
<td>Class materials were unorganized and hard to</td>
<td>Class materials were set up but unorganized</td>
<td>Class materials were organized and easy to navigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied course designs</td>
<td>No design was applied to the site</td>
<td>Only part of the site was designed with appropriate school design</td>
<td>Site was designed with school information and appropriate school designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created assignments</td>
<td>Was not able to create an assignment</td>
<td>Was able to post an assignment but was missing parts or was unclear</td>
<td>Assignment was created and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign the assignment to their respective class</td>
<td>Assignment was not made available to the class</td>
<td>Assignment was available but not to all students</td>
<td>Assignment was made available to all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign a due date</td>
<td>No due date was assigned</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Due date was assigned and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes the grading section</td>
<td>Grading section was not set up and contained no grades</td>
<td>Grading section was only partially set up.</td>
<td>Grading section was set up properly and contained grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Task</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Login to Blackboard</td>
<td>Using their username and password trainees will log into Blackboard</td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Access and navigate all the features in Blackboard</td>
<td>Gain an understand of all the features in Blackboard</td>
<td>Knowledge, Understanding</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Create an assignment</td>
<td>Learner will be able to create an assign using Blackboard</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Create the assignment title</td>
<td>Learner will locate the correct area to enter the assignment title</td>
<td>Application Knowledge, Understanding</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Give the assignment a description</td>
<td>Learner will locate the correct area to enter a description</td>
<td>Application Knowledge, Understanding</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Enter instructions for an assignment</td>
<td>Learner will locate and enter instructions for an assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Create a link for the assignment</td>
<td>Learner will demonstrate how to link assignments</td>
<td>Intellectual skill</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Complete the grading section</td>
<td>Learner will set up the grading system</td>
<td>Knowledge, Understanding</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Demonstrate how to designate that an assignment is to be graded.</td>
<td>When using the grading tool, the learner will grade an assignment</td>
<td>Knowledge, Understanding</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Release grades to</td>
<td>When assigning</td>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Formative Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students after it has been graded</td>
<td>grades the learner will show the procedure for releasing grades to students</td>
<td>Knowledge, Understanding Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Assign the assignment to appropriate students</td>
<td>Learner will be able to follow the steps to assign an assignment to their class</td>
<td>Application Understanding Formative Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**
